

EFFECTS OF A BEHAVIOR-CHANGING TREATMENT
UPON IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION REASSIGNMENTS

A Field Report
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Graduate School of Education and Human Services
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by
Earl Marvin Dick

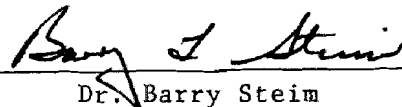
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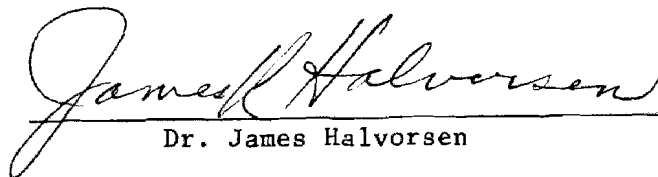
Earl Marvin Dick

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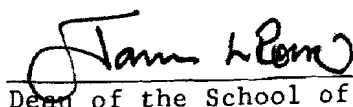


Dr. Barry Steim

Chair



Dr. James Halvorsen



Dean of the School of Graduate Studies

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An abstract of a Field Report by

Earl Marvin Dick

May 1988

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Advisor: Dr. Barry Steim

The problem.

What components should be part of an in-school suspension (ISS) program for the program to be an effective and successful disciplinary tool?

Procedure.

During a six-week period, half of the students assigned to ISS in Fort Dodge, Iowa, received an academic treatment and worked on academic assignments while in ISS. The others received the academic treatment, plus a behavior-changing treatment that focused upon self-assessment of students' behavior choices and explored alternate behavior choices. An analysis of reassignments to ISS was made to determine if the combined treatments resulted in fewer ISS reassignments than the academic treatment alone.

Findings.

Out of 60 students who received both treatments, 11 were reassigned to ISS, while 13 of the 62 who received only the academic treatment were reassigned. The behavior-changing treatment was not significant in reducing ISS reassignments.

Conclusions.

The results of this study provide no evidence that the addition of the behavior-changing component to the Fort Dodge ISS program affected student reassignments to ISS.

Recommendations.

If conducted over a full academic year, different results might be obtained. Also, a more comprehensive program, providing follow-up guidance after ISS to reinforce the behavior-changing concepts, might be more effective.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Most secondary schools utilize in-school suspension (ISS), in one form or another, as one of the negative consequences in their disciplinary programs. What components need to be part of an in-school suspension program for the ISS program to be an effective and successful disciplinary tool?

Significance of the Study

This research is important because it explores the effectiveness of in-school suspension alternative programming. The ultimate purpose of ISS, as with any disciplinary measure, is to move student behavior from an inappropriate mode of behavior to an appropriate mode of behavior. This research would demonstrate if the addition of a behavior-changing treatment to the current academic treatment would result in fewer reassignments to the Fort Dodge Community School, Fort Dodge, Iowa, ISS program. Conclusions from this research should help determine the effective components of the Fort Dodge ISS program.

Definition of Terms

In-school suspension: A short term in-school placement that provides for removal of a student from the regular class setting because of violations of the discipline policy and/or school rules.

Academic treatment: A treatment that continues the students' academic learning experience while placed in ISS, including assignments from the regular class teachers, instruction provided by the ISS staff, and/or a combination of these.

Behavior-changing treatment: A treatment during the assignment to ISS that helps students examine their behavior choices and explore alternative behavior choices through Jostens "One of a Kind" program, which consists of students viewing and discussing a film and two video tapes and completing a self-assessment workbook. Students will be selected in alternating sequence for this treatment.

Effective ISS programs: ISS programs are defined as being effective when students are not assigned to ISS more than two times in one school year.

Secondary school students: Students enrolled in a middle, junior high, or high school, as defined by the local school district.

Reassignment to ISS: Reassignment occurs when students receive additional assignments to ISS following their initial assignment to the in-school suspension program.

Variables

Dependent variable: Reassignments to the in-school suspension program.

Independent variables: Academic treatment and behavior-changing program treatment.

Research Hypothesis

The research hypothesis of this proposed study is that the addition of a behavior-changing treatment to the academic treatment will result in fewer reassignments to the in-school suspension program than the application of the academic treatment alone. The null hypothesis is that there is no difference in ISS reassignments between students receiving the behavior-changing treatment and those not receiving the treatment.

Limitations

This research does deal with a small, intact group, specifically, those students assigned to ISS. Admittedly, during the time span of the treatments, outside influences may affect student behavior. These influences may include student maturation and/or intervention by other school personnel and/or parents. Also, some students may drop out of school during the treatment period.

Delimitations

Conclusions from this research should help determine the effective components of the Fort Dodge ISS program. Before results can be generalized

to other ISS programs, this research should be replicated in ISS programs in other school districts.

Assumptions

Outside interventions upon the students who receive the treatments should influence both groups equally. Also, in a progressive system of discipline, these interventions would have been present prior to the assignment to ISS. Had they been effective with these students, the students would not have reached the ISS stage of the discipline program. Also, the academic treatment should randomize out during the study.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

Since the late 1960's, the number one problem in our secondary schools has been the issue of school discipline (Perry & Duke, 1978). During this time, the frequent use of out-of-school suspensions by school administrators as a disciplinary technique has come under increased scrutiny and criticism by parents and the legal system (Mizell, 1978; Price, 1980; Stessman, 1984,1985).

A survey of secondary school principals cited the following reasons for suspensions, in rank order: "attendance problems (truancy, skipping school, tardiness); smoking; non-violent acts disruptive to the educational process (disrespect, defiance, misbehavior, class disruption, cheating); violations of school rules; assault, fighting, or threat of injury; use of drugs or alcohol; and vandalism, theft, or destruction of property" (Chobot & Garibaldi, 1982, p.317).

Criticism of the widespread use of out-of-school suspensions includes a variety of concerns. It does not appear logical to suspend a student for not coming to school, yet truancy is a primary reason for many suspensions (Stessman, 1984, 1985). Suspension is not an effective response to many non-violent offenses, such as smoking, disrespect, use of abusive language, or insubordination (Mizell, 1978). Students frequently become involved in delinquent behavior while suspended from school, which results in increased problems for the juvenile correction system (Price, 1980). Seyfarth (1980) says that minority students are more likely to be suspended in disproportion to their numbers in the student population. A loss of state aid, based upon average daily attendance, combined with decreased parental and community support,

can directly affect educational programs for all students (Chobot & Garibaldi, 1982).

According to Mizell (1978), school administrators acknowledge that out-of-school suspensions are often a convenient and simplistic reaction to complex problems that may involve school personnel, the student, the student's family, and the community. Some argue that the school is not meeting its responsibility to students when students are removed from school without prior exposure to techniques and services designed to remediate the problems responsible for the inappropriate behavior (Mizell, 1978). Since out-of-school suspensions are often nothing more than vacations for the misbehaving students, Jones (1983) states that they are often not viewed as punitive by the students and, therefore, are not an effective deterrent to inappropriate behavior. For these reasons, school administrators are more often utilizing an in-school alternative to out-of-school suspension: the in-school suspension, or ISS.

The basic premise of ISS is that the offending student is kept isolated in school, as opposed to being sent home as punishment (Patterson, 1985). According to Mendez and Sanders (1981), most in-school suspensions are assigned for five days or less.

If the in-school suspension is to be an effective disciplinary tool, however, certain criteria must exist in the program. Short and Noblit (1985) state that the students assigned to ISS must view the program as punitive and must be isolated from other students in the school and within the ISS room. They may be required to arrive at school and leave school at different times than other students, eat lunch at a different time, and be granted restroom privileges only at specified times during the school day. No social interaction or talking with anyone other than the ISS staff should be allowed. When they arrive at school, students should report directly to the ISS center and may not leave the center

until they are escorted from the school property at dismissal time. While assigned to an in-school suspension, students should not be permitted to attend or participate in any school functions or extra-curricular activities (Weiss, 1983).

Since a major rationale for in-school suspension is that the student's learning is not interrupted during the suspension, it is important that instruction continue during the assignment to ISS (Sykora, 1981). According to Price (1980), Chobot and Garibaldi (1982), Stessman (1984, 1985), and Mizell (1978), the student's regular classroom teachers should be expected to provide assignments for the student during his/her stay in ISS. Often teachers object strenuously to this, stating that the work involved in organizing the student's assignments and materials is an unfair, extra burden on them. In order for the ISS program to function effectively, Seyfarth (1980) maintains that administrators must strictly enforce this requirement of teachers. He adds that assignments completed in ISS should be graded by the student's regular teachers and should apply toward class credit. In some ISS programs, if assignments are not completed at the end of the suspension period, the student's stay in ISS is extended until the student's work is up-to-date (Patterson, 1985). Also, some school districts have designed instructional packets to support or, in some cases, supplant classroom assignments (Seyfarth, 1980).

Regardless of the procedure utilized for maintaining the student's academic progress, it is critical that the regular school personnel thoroughly understand the philosophy, rationale, and procedures of the in-school suspension program (Corbett, 1981).

The ISS program should be staffed by a teacher and/or counselor (Chobot & Garibaldi, 1982). ISS staff members should be committed to the ISS program and to working successfully with troubled students with a variety of class and

cultural orientations. They need to be more interested in identifying and solving real problems than in merely responding to or modifying misbehavior symptoms. In addition to academic assistance, ISS staff should provide counseling opportunities for students while they are assigned to ISS. Also, it is recommended that students be required to meet with the regular school counselor upon completion of their time in in-school suspension, prior to being readmitted to the regular classroom. Follow-up counseling sessions are sometimes required, also (Mizell, 1978).

While assigned to in-school suspension, students are required to participate in some form of behavioral assessment in many ISS programs. This component may focus on the student, teachers, parents, and/or school structure (Noblit & Short, 1985). According to Stessman (1984, 1985), the behavioral assessment may include self-analysis activities that address values clarification, judgements, and decision making regarding the infraction that resulted in the in-school suspension.

Information gathered from the assessment is used to guide the direction of the counseling for the student. Counseling goals for ISS students would include involving the student in identifying and assuming some responsibility for solving the behavioral problem, confronting the reasons for the inappropriate behavior, analyzing the relationship between the student's behavior and self-interest, accepting responsibility for and learning to manage his/her behavior, and coping more responsibly with the behavior of others (Mizell, 1978).

The success of an ISS program can be assessed by various means. In Camdenton, Missouri, only 15.5 percent of students assigned to ISS were reassigned. Court referrals made by the school dropped in proportion to suspensions and absentee rates of students assigned to ISS improved (Price, 1980). Statistics from Harborsfield High School, Greenlawn, New York,

conclude that ISS significantly decreased the number of lost instructional days, the number of in-school suspensions and reassignments to ISS, and the number of disciplinary infractions (Weiss, 1983). In Perryville, Maryland, the ISS program has reduced out-of-school suspensions by 40 percent, decreased discipline referrals by 20 percent, and has reduced the number of students who withdraw from school because of disciplinary actions (Rudolph, 1984).

In summary, it appears that a successful in-school suspension program can effectively reduce truancy, inappropriate school behavior, and out-of-school suspensions. The ISS program should be punitive and structured in format. It should contain a strong academic component, with the cooperation of the regular classroom teachers, to ensure that continuity of learning is maintained. Counseling and behavior-changing components should be an integral part of the ISS program to help students gain self-awareness, self-control, and an understanding of alternate choices of behavior available to them.

CHAPTER 3

Methods and Procedures

This proposed research project deals with the components, or student treatments, that are present in an effective in-school suspension program for secondary school students.

Research Design

This project is quasi-experimental. Independent variables are: (1) academic treatment, defined as a continuation of students' academic learning experience, including assignments from regular classroom teachers, instruction provided by the ISS teacher, and/or a combination of these; (2) behavior-changing treatment, defined as treatment involving self-assessment that helps students examine their behavior choices and explore alternative behavior choices. The design can be programmed as follows:

$G_1 \quad X_1 \text{ ----- } O_1$

$G_2 \quad X_1 \text{ --- } X_2 \text{ --- } O_2$

X_1 is the academic treatment and X_2 is the behavior-changing treatment.

The dependent variable is effective in-school suspension programs, as evidenced by the number of reassignments to the ISS program.

Description of Subjects

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The subjects are students enrolled in a Fort Dodge Community School middle school or high school who have been assigned by a principal or assistant principal to in-school suspension for a breach of discipline resulting from inappropriate school behavior. Every student assigned to ISS will receive the academic treatment. Students in the experimental group will also receive the behavior-changing treatment.

Instrumentation

No formal measures or instruments will be utilized. Informal measures include in-school suspension school report (see Appendix A) from the sending schools, which assign the students to ISS and list the reason for each suspension, and ISS teacher assignment sheet (see Appendix B), which contain the students' academic assignments from their regular classroom teachers.

Materials

Materials utilized for the academic treatment include textbooks and instructional materials from the students' regular classroom teachers and supplemental instructional materials provided by the ISS teacher.

The behavior-changing treatment utilizes Jostens One of a Kind program: one 16mm film, two video tapes, and a self-assessment workbook.

Experimental Procedure

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Students who are assigned to ISS will be alternately placed in one of the two treatment groups in the sequence of their assignments to ISS. Race, sex, grade, age, ability level, sending school, and grade point average will not be considered in treatment assignment.

Students in Group 1 will receive the academic treatment (X_1).

Students in Group 2 will receive the academic treatment (X_1) and the behavior-changing treatment (X_2). The behavior-changing treatment, Jostens One of a Kind program, consists of students viewing and discussing a film and two video tapes and completing a self-assessment workbook. The treatment is administered by the ISS program coordinator.

Data Collection

Data collection will consist of the ISS staff recording the number of times that individual students are assigned to in-school suspension and the treatment they received while assigned to ISS.

Analysis

The outcomes of the treatments will be the number of times students are reassigned to in-school suspension for inappropriate behavior during the last six weeks of the 1986-87 school year.

Analysis of reassignments to ISS will focus on the prior treatment the students received. An attempt will be made to determine if the behavior-changing treatment, combined with the academic treatment, is more effective in reducing the number of reassignments to ISS than the academic treatment alone.

A frequency distribution of the results will be included.

Treatments will be considered significant at the .05 level.

Statistical analysis will utilize the chi-square distribution, charted as follows:

		<u>Treatments</u>	
		Academic	Behavior-changing plus academic
No Reassignment	0		
Reasssignment	1		

Statistical analysis will also utilize an analysis of variance.

An analysis of reassignments to ISS by the sending school will also be done to see if any significance exists in this area.

CHAPTER 4

Results

The results of this study are summarized in Table 1 and Figure 1. An analysis of variance and a chi-square distribution analysis showed that the Jostens behavior-changing treatment was not significant at the .05 level of significance in reducing reassignments to in-school suspension when compared to students who had not received the treatment. In other words, students in this study who received the behavior-changing treatment, in addition to the academic treatment, did not show a significant reduction ($p < .05$) in reassignments to ISS when compared with students who received only the academic treatment.

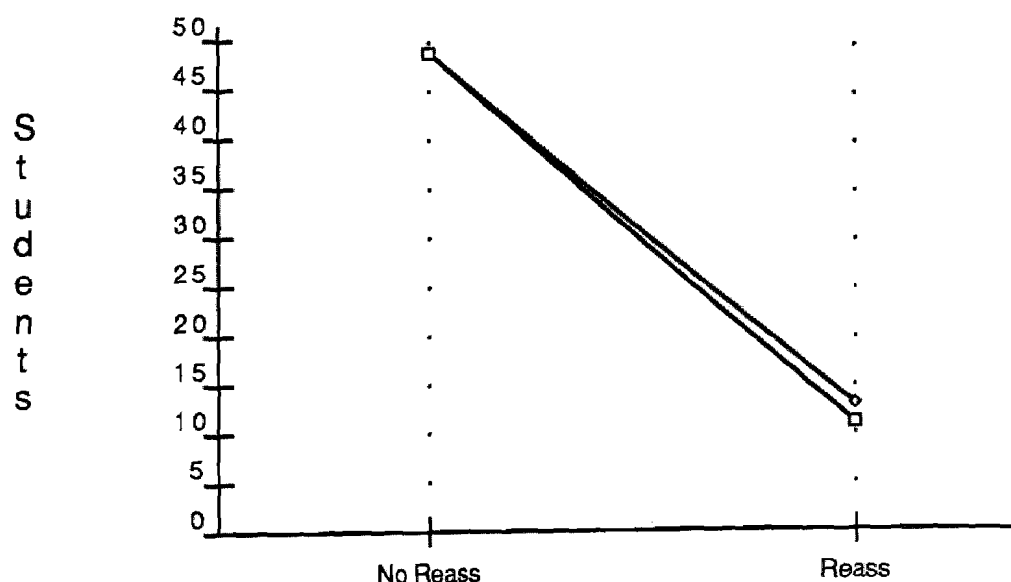
During the six week period of the study, sixty students who were assigned to ISS received the behavior-changing treatment, in addition to the academic treatment. Sixty-two received the academic treatment, but did not receive the Jostens behavior-changing treatment. Table 1 shows the results of the study in a chi-square distribution model.

Table 1. Distribution of reassignments to ISS.

	Academic Treatment Only	Academic Plus Beh. Change Treatment	T o t a l
No Reassign. 0	49 40.1%	49 40.2%	98 80.3%
Reassignment 1	13 10.7%	11 9.0%	24 19.7%
Total	62 50.8%	60 49.2%	

The results in Table 1 do not show a significant difference between students who received only the academic treatment and students who received Jostens One of a Kind behavior-changing treatment, in addition to the academic treatment. The results do show that the null hypothesis (there is no difference in ISS reassignments between students receiving the behavior-changing treatment and those not receiving the treatment) was not rejected. A summary of the results is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Reassignments to ISS.



Analysis of the data utilizing an analysis of variance design showed a .437 level of significance for the effect of the behavior-change treatment upon reassignment to in-school suspension. This confirms the chi-square analysis that the Jostens treatment was not a significant factor in ISS reassignments in this study.

An analysis of the results classified by the sending school revealed no significant differences, therefore, these results are not tabulated here.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

The results of this study provide no evidence that the addition of Jostens One of a Kind behavior-changing component to the in-school suspension program in the Fort Dodge Community School District affected student reassignments to ISS.

Two factors may have negatively affected the study. First, this was a short term study and was conducted during the spring of the year when student misbehavior historically escalates. If the study was conducted over a full academic year, results may be different, because of a larger time span as a base.

Also, the behavior-changing treatment was implanted into the ISS program as an isolated addition to the program. A more comprehensive program, which included a guidance and counseling component to provide follow-up guidance for the students to help reinforce the behavior-changing component, might be more effective in reducing student behaviors that lead to assignment to the in-school suspension program.

Although this study failed to reject the null hypothesis, research seems to indicate that an effective in-school suspension program does contain some type of behavior-changing component. A study resulting in additional data over a longer time frame and/or incorporating additional guidance and counseling components may show more effective results. This study, however, showed no significant effect from the addition of the behavior-changing treatment to students assigned to the in-school suspension program.

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Appendix A: ISS School Report

SCHOOL REPORT

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for
PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE PROGRAM
IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION
AREY SCHOOL
576-1068

Date completed _____

Administrator in charge _____

Student's Name _____

School _____

Date(s) of Suspension _____

Counselor _____

Number of Suspension _____

Reason for the suspension: _____

Advice and possible explanation for behavior: _____

Checklist: ()

- _____ The counselor has been notified.
- _____ The teacher(s) have/has completed the Assignment Sheet(s).
- _____ The proper people have been notified about this suspension.
- _____ The student has the necessary materials ready for the suspension period.

Comments: _____

White-ISS Yellow-Principal or Ass't. Principal Pink-Parent/Guardian

White - ISS Yellow - Principal or Ass't. Principal

TEACHER ASSIGNMENT SHEET

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE PROGRAM

In-School Suspension

Arey School: 576-1068

Student _____

Date _____

School _____

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Team Leader _____ Please see that this sheet is returned to the office by _____
(for Middle Schools)

Subject (to be completed)	Teacher	Instructions: Please list assignments. Include and label extra work that could be completed Provide the information needed to teach the assignment. List the textbooks & materials needed.	Comments
1 hour of:			
1 hour of:			
1 hour of:			
1 hour of:			
1 hour of:			
1 hour of:			

Appendix B: ISS Teacher Assignment Sheet